

Something Different

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Author: me3ka

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Summary: Jenna reflects on her relationship with Isaac and Gareth after uniting forces in Contigo. Particularly Gareth. Focus on flameshipping. Hints of mudshipping, windshipping, and one-sided valeshipping. One-shot.

***Chapter 1*: Something Different**

I wrote this quickie flameshipping fic right after my trip to UCSD. Which was today. :D

Ivan: The way you spend your life is so uninspiring. ._.

Sheba: But, at least you use it well on devoting some worship time to me.

Sorry. I can't say there's any of that, Sheba.

Sheba: ...But, you do worship me?

Um, no. No, I do not.

Ivan: Beside the point. Anyway, I star in this fic. :D

Sheba: You've been in all of them. QQ

You're in this one, too. D: There's even some windshipping. And some mudshipping.

Sheba: I'll never be the focus of your stories again. It's all about Ivan!

Ivan: Gareth gets about as much attention as me.

This is true. And weird. He's not even my favorite.

Sheba&Ivan: WE ARE. QQ

... D: Well, on to Jenna and Gareth, everyone.

Disclaimer: I do not own Golden Sun. But I do wish I did. It'd be an excellent b-day gift. (Two days from now. ;D)

one-shot.

GaretxJenna [flameshipping]

Something Different.

Maybe she had been too conscious of herself, but Jenna had been an uncharacteristically nervous wreck when the two combined groups of Isaac's party and Felix's party had come together for their first meal as a whole in Contigo.

Although the normally confident girl was not unfamiliar with the people who had gathered, with the exception of the blonde kid with Jupiter based powers and the pretty blue-haired girl that was presumably a Mercury Adept, she couldn't help but fear the formation of an in-group hatred, the possibility that one or two of her teammates would come to an immediate disagreement. As the evening stretched on, however, this began to seem like less and less of a likely outcome. Realizing this, Jenna's nerves finally began to loosen, and her Jupiter Adept companion did not fail to notice.

"Are you okay now?"

Jenna gave Sheba an estranged look. "What would make you think I wasn't?"

"Maybe the constipated slash overly wide-eyed slash twitchy look you were giving everyone." Sheba paused in her reflection, unfazed by Jenna's expected trademark leer. "Oh, that, and how your voice kind of shook when introductions were being made. I don't know; I'm just naturally observant." She gave her favored friend the brightest of her smiles, to which Jenna just sighed and forced a grin back.

"You're so weird when you do that. Did my voice really shake noticeably?"

"So much that I'm surprised you didn't break a vocal chord."

"Like that's possible." Jenna frowned at Sheba's attempt at humor and idly drummed her nails on the table. Everyone had begun to disperse around the Inn's main floor, and mini groups were forming with people she probably could have seen coming together if she hadn't been originally focused on the pessimistic view of the situation.

"So, you wanna join the festivities?" Sheba inclined her head at Jenna and flicked her green eyes up and then back at her in a quick succession, indicating to the rest of the room. "It'd be good to make peace with everyone. Especially since that's what you were so worried about."

Jenna restrained herself from accusing the smaller blonde girl of Mind Read, reminding herself that she had somewhat openly admitted to being a temporary stress case, and shook her head lightly.

"I think I'll just kind of observe for the moment. Settle myself some more before going in."

"Suit yourself." Sheba grinned at her momentarily before turning to skip off and join some of the newer party members. Jenna remained at the table, her chin against her knuckles as she looked on to the scene that was being played out.

Kraden, Felix and Isaac were the nearest to the main doors, their expressions serious and intense (although it was pretty comical seeing Felix looking up at Isaac, who was standing, from the most comfortable chair in the common area). It was pretty obvious from their pensive hand gestures and

constant nods/head shakes that they were updating each other on the most important events that had occurred and strategies on how to go about continuing the quest.

A little ways off from the two Venus Adepts and the Scholar were Picard and Gareth, each looking considerably lively and active in whatever it was they were talking about. From Picard's feigned annoyed facial expressions and mimed jail cell motions, and Gareth's laughter and exaggerated victory poses, Jenna figured Picard was retelling his tale of his temporary imprisonment. As the conversation went on, they began to look more serious, still with the smirks though, and flexing became common. It must have become into a training discussion.

At the end of the massive dining table, and directly across from Jenna, Sheba had joined in a conversation with the two that Jenna was not familiar with, besides shortly seeing them with Isaac and Gareth at the previous Lighthouses. It was difficult distinguishing what kind of words were being exchanged there, as Jenna only knew one of the participating members well enough, but Sheba looked as though she were having a good time. Interestingly enough, the younger boy- Ivan, she believed- seemed pretty hooked on whatever was going on... but, then again, she couldn't be sure of his reactions right off the bat.

Jenna returned her attention to Isaac, the unofficial leader, the first out of two boys that had made up her childhood. He had grown considerably, and his face had matured even more so, which only added to his beginning charm. He had gone from being sheepishly humble to putting confidence in his stride and posture, and it made him look all the better. When he had looked at her for the first time since joining hands with her brother, his expression in entirety was different from the friend-to-friend looks he had given to her

prior to her "kidnapping". Now, if anything, he looked at her with brotherly concern, and, truth be told, Jenna was unsure that this was the kind of attention she wanted from him.

Then there was Gareth. Change-wise, he had done the most growing. From his behavior then and there, Jenna could still see that the roots of his typical carefree and more-than-slightly reckless personality had remained, but he had also taken some of the role of responsibility, whereas he would previously have dumped it all on Isaac and hoped for the best. Along with that, whatever small streak of cowardice that had somehow been reflected in his person as a kid was completely gone. If anything, Gareth seemed to be the epitome of courage, and it seemed as though only he could pull off having honed that kind of muscle while keeping an aesthetically pleasing face.

They had grown so much in her absence, and Jenna had felt a spark of jealousy, but not just because of the new girl in their group, but also the guy. It must have been a bit of protectiveness. While she had been used to having the two around her and her only for most of her life, it was turning out now that they could indeed meet new people and have close friends that weren't her. It was a bit of a selfish thought, but they were her security, her permanent link to the past, her stability. Sharing them was... weird.

"Geez, Jenna, we lose you for a little bit and you lose all sociability?" Jenna blinked and lifted her head from her hand to properly straighten out in her chair as Gareth walked up to her seat, smiling broadly. A quick flicker of her brown eyes told her that Picard had joined in with Sheba and the other two Adepts, leaving Gareth free to pull her away from her reverie.

"Whatever. I'm more sociable than you." Jenna forced a tight smile, which Gareth pretended to accept.

"Said the girl spacing off as her friends collectively partied."

"I would hardly consider this partying." Jenna stuck her tongue out and stood up tall, although it was hardly effective on the towering male redhead.

"You can't threaten me. You're still as tiny as ever," Gareth teased, flicking at her bangs playfully. Jenna puffed her cheeks out at him, the sizing perfected due to muscle memory, but Gareth only grinned wider. Expecting another jab at their contrasting height, Jenna spun on her heels and feigned walking away in protest.

"And you're still so mean-..." was her responding grumble. As she took a step forward though, he locked his arms around her retreating shoulders and pulled her back into a very different kind of embrace, one that Jenna could not say she was used to, especially from the usually hesitant Gareth. She felt her cheeks heating up against her will, and weird kind of fluttery feeling encased her.

"I missed you! Do you have any idea long it's been?" His voice was light, still playful, but Jenna remained entranced by the feeling, confusion still dominant. "There's no one like our Jenna in all of Angara!"

"G-get off!" Her voice came out slightly harsh, and she caught the passing of a hurt look flash across Gareth's puppy dog face, so she quickly added, "You wouldn't want to crush me so soon. Or you'd have to start your search again." She winked and stuck out her tongue again in a quick recovery, but the feeling remained in her person. Gareth relaxed, and laughed uneasily.

"Of course not. You seem well. Fiesty! But well, nonetheless." His arm reached out for her almost automatically, but he seemed to think better of it and brought it to the back of his head instead. Avoiding her gaze, he chuckled and said, "Come on. Since your brother, the old man, and Isaac seem so into the world's issues, let me properly introduce you to Ivan and Mia."

"Okay," Jenna answered, allowing Gareth to take the lead. She frowned to herself, now more unsettled than when the meal had just begun. What had been that completely out of place feeling that Gareth's hug had sparked? Normally, that kind of emotion would come in lesser doses when Isaac would compliment her or praise her, or something of the like. Had it been so long that just anything could ignite it? Or was it unique to Gareth...?

And then, she had snapped at him. If anything, he hadn't meant anything romantic by it at all. They were best friends, and it had been a long time since they had been so physically close to each other, *and* they were in an extremely public place, so wouldn't all of that rule out the romance factor? Jenna flushed, her mental conflicts arising in too many different speculations at once. His expression after that impulsive rebuttal... It was something of pain, and it'd looked so wrong on him. It was too soon to be hurting someone she felt she should protect.

"Sorry to interrupt, guys!" Gareth immediately jumped into the conversation, and Jenna couldn't help but wonder if her reaction had affected him negatively at all. He ruffled Ivan's hair jokingly, which earned him a well-aimed kick in the shin. "Ah, you bastard!"

"You know what happens when you belittle me."

"I get reprimanded in a *little* way?"

"I'll reprimand you in your *little*, if you keep this up."

"Boys." The Imilian girl simultaneously smacked the two's heads with expertly executed usage of Lift. "This kind of impression is unacceptable."

"But," Gareth protested, "we're not at the table!"

"We're in company."

"They're no longer just company!" He received a mute glare from Mia. He sighed. "Okay, fine." He took a step back and motioned to Jenna, who was now directly to his right. "You guys remember Jenna?"

Jenna, whom had been watching their interactions with high interest (probably surprised at how fond they seemed of each other), suddenly froze up on being called out. "Um. Hello."

"How unlike you, Jenna." Picard smiled at her knowingly, his arms crossed in amused poise. "It is rare to find you so lacking in the area of greeting."

"No kidding," Sheba added, moving to her rightful position on the right side of Jenna, tapping her hand lightly. "Surely you can do better than that."

Before Jenna could heatedly respond to their teasing remarks, Ivan moved back slightly with the perfect manipulation of wind to make the motion effective, but not cheesy. "I'll take it. Hey, Jenna. We've heard a lot about you. Specifically, I have. Both the scary and the charming from the freakishly detailed flashbacks in Gareth's mind." He

winked at her playfully, doing it more to get a rise out of Gareth than a reaction from her.

However, that is not to say that both did not occur.

"You're really in for it now!"

"Heeeeey, Jenna, that's juicy stuff," Sheba laughed, nudging the now flustered Mars Adept. Jenna nudged her back twice as hard as she pondered on how to respond to this seemingly indirect comment.

"I hope you'll forgive Ivan. He's picked up on the habit of torturing Gareth with both true and untrue comments, and it's becoming hard to distinguish between the two," Mia immediately voiced an apology on their behalves and smiled softly at Jenna. "Nice to meet you face to face, Jenna. I'm Mia. We have indeed heard a lot about you, but it's been all kinds of stories from both Isaac and Gareth." Jenna noticed Mia's clear blue eyes momentarily shift in Isaac's general direction, but then refocus on her. "I don't think Ivan's actually intruded on Gareth's mind, but he likes to make him believe he has." Her finishing smile left even Jenna slightly charmed.

"I see, so that's how it is," the auburn-haired girl mumbled distractedly, unsure of how to feel about Mia's character. Whereas jealousy previously dictated her judgment of the girl, it now became painfully evident that she could not bring herself to hate her. It was kind of conflicting.

"I find it rather comical how both Jupiter Adepts seem particularly fond of their respective Mars Adept companions in both parties," Picard observed, his hand on his chin pensively. Mia laughed in agreement, Jenna smiled sheepishly, and Sheba stood up proudly.

"You have to admit that a girls' friendship seems less painful than a guys'," Ivan threw in casually, dodging some rather fearsome fighting moves from Gareth. "But, I digress."

"You're so cool," Sheba laughed jokingly, earning a smile from Ivan. The smile, however, prolonged Ivan's evasion a moment too long.

"Gotcha." Gareth pulled the blonde into a headlock and looked up at his onlookers with a wide grin. "A girls' friendship is definitely less painful than a guys'. But. I DIGRESS." He proceeded to drill his knuckles into Ivan's head, and then routinely drop him to the floor. There was a small amount of clapping, and Jenna smiled at Gareth's beaming and bowing figure. She couldn't help but notice, though, that he avoided her direct gaze after that moment throughout the night.

Old habits died hard. If she was correct in assuming that her earlier actions had indeed upset Gareth, she knew that she could find him sneaking away to the most secluded spot without leaving the Inn in the middle of the night.

Waiting until her roommates, Sheba and the newest female, Mia, were fast asleep, she slipped into her boots, exited the room, and climbed the staircase in the deepest part of the Inn that would lead her to the rooftop.

At first, she thought that maybe his old habit of rooftop hopping had faded away when she didn't see him immediately, but then she noticed the outline of his back in the leftmost corner of the roof's railing.

"So, you still do this kind of thing, hm? Gareth?" Jenna tapped his shoulder before sitting beside him, mirroring his move of putting his legs through the bars so as to swing them freely.

He jumped a little, startled, and didn't immediately relax when he saw it was her.

"Oh, um, hey! No, yeah, this is still my thing," he grinned sheepishly, a subtle flash of teeth in the little moonlight. "Or, at least, when I can get away without Ivan noticing." He rolled his eyes, or maybe he paused in silent reflection. "It must be a Jupiter Adept thing."

"I don't think it is," Jenna disagreed, giggling. "Sheba sleeps like a rock. I had to get Picard to Douse her once. She was absolutely livid."

Garet laughed, but it wasn't the usual rumble of his hearty laughter. "I can imagine that."

"Yeah." Jenna stared at him quietly from her peripheral vision, unnerved. Of course, direct confrontation was in her nature, but this was something so different, that she couldn't seem to leave the beating-around-the-bush mannerism alone this time around.

"You seem so much stronger."

The phrase surprised Jenna. "Stronger?"

"Yeah," he said it like it was the most obvious thing in the world. "Like, you've got the whole warrior vibe going on. You still look fragile, but..." He paused, staring out below his swinging boots, "It's totally different."

Jenna wasn't sure how to respond. "It is totally different."

"Did you come up here because I've been acting weird?" So much for beating around the bush. Jenna turned to him, but he still wasn't looking at her.

"Well, yes. But, I had an idea why."

"What's that?"

"Because... it's because I sort of went off on you, isn't it?"

"I guess so." Gareth frowned, the lighting hitting his face in a whole different way. "But, it's just what it triggered, in my head. See, I thought I could protect you, Jenna."

"Protect me..." Jenna felt the creeping heat of a blush take over her cheeks again. Why was he affecting her this way now?

"Yeah. But, you obviously don't need that." He smiled at her painfully. "You've grown so much."

"I was thinking the same about you."

"Yeah?"

"Yeah."

"I guess we both grew then. But you're still short." There was a laugh in his voice, and Jenna found herself smiling too.

"You're such a jerk." She leaned against his shoulder, and he stiffened, unsure, but then relaxed.

"I know."

The atmosphere was so right, and so different, but all uncertainty faded away with the echo of his voice. Jenna sort of nudged him with her head, and so he blinked and smiled down at her. Angling herself just right, she leaned upwards and pressed her lips against his with a bit of force.

Garet almost jumped out of it in alarm, but then relaxed and let her steal away his first kiss, along with the doubts of seeing her as his first love.

When she pulled away, she said, "Let this be okay for now." He nodded, and she dropped against his shoulder once again.

Dizzy from her rather forthcoming actions, Jenna couldn't help but wonder how she would sneak back into her room and keep this memory from Sheba's nosy observance.

Sheba: This feels longer than the others.

There was a lot more detail. And yet, not enough. QQ

Ivan: Lazy wannabe author.

I was gonna make a follow-up on this, but I strung it into one. Did I cheat the readers?

Sheba: Don't you always?

...Anyway, at least there was Garet and Ivan humor here, too. YAY. :D

Ivan: This is not amusing. Dislike.

FACEBOOK. Anyway, please leave me a review and tell me what your thoughts were on this piece. :)

Sheba: The Djinni didn't even come out.

Awh. D: REVIEW ANYWAY. ;D